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Report

Boosting trade and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa

Wednesday 28 – Friday 30 June 2017 | WP1551

In association with:



Department
for International
Development



Department for
International Trade



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The last 15 years have seen fast economic growth in many Sub-Saharan African countries. However, there is a need to translate these factors into sustained poverty reduction through greater productivity, better job creation and greater shared prosperity – still challenging for many of the region's economies. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals under Agenda 2030 offers a renewed opportunity for developed economies to partner with Sub-Saharan countries to deliver real socioeconomic benefits and greater equality.

A sharp focus on developing and implementing interconnected, sustainable economic policies and governance structures should be a priority for governments in the leading regional economies, with an eye to creating the predictable and stable environments for inward investment that multinationals seek. What are considered to be the main barriers to international investment and how can they be overcome? How can we bring renewed energy to the virtuous and self-perpetuating circle of greater investment, deeper supply chains, trade, productivity and job creation within and with Africa.

One of the drivers of greater prosperity will be stronger intra-regional trade, the development of more productive local businesses in sectors with real growth and job creation potential – agriculture, financial services, renewable energy. Boosting the ease of transacting business across borders in the Sub-Saharan region should enable the creation of localised value chains, retention of human capital, export growth and ultimately greater industrialisation.

The purpose of this Wilton Park roundtable was to identify and develop channels that facilitate greater trade and investment within, between and beyond the borders of the leading Sub-Saharan economies. It mapped out areas where developed and emerging states can partner with a range of countries in the region to share best practice in developing trade and investment policy with the long term goal of doubling both in a decade.

Key points

- Despite recent developments in many countries across the region, both hard and soft infrastructure remains an obstacle to competitive trade. The emergence of new funding sources, along with greater competition in the development arena, has opened up new opportunities for driving projects forward.
- More support on compliance with standards should pay dividends in facilitating intra-regional trade, if implemented effectively throughout the region. Capacity building and stronger regional relationships between trading blocs can help in achieving this, but there could also be a specific role for UK institutions with particular expertise in standards formation, implementation and compliance.
- Transformative partnerships between international business and national governments, which consider wider societal development outcomes, can help restore trust in international organisations. Governmental and non-governmental partners can also play a role in facilitating the formation of these partnerships
- Significant opportunities for investment will continue to grow throughout the region over the next decade. Driven by many of the regions emerging challenges, these opportunities encompass urban infrastructure, increased education and skills development, the digital economy and Africa's growing services sector.

“The lack of accuracy and transparency in government planning, procurement and delivery processes can undermine infrastructure projects' bankability to investors.”

Infrastructure

Tackling deficits in trade infrastructure: challenges for development actors

1. The sustainable development of both hard and soft infrastructure across the region is critical to facilitating intra-regional trade and helping African businesses integrate with global value chains. With Sub-Saharan Africa comprising 16 landlocked countries, cross border trade infrastructure is invaluable to connecting ports with producers and consumers in these countries. It is imperative that goods flow as freely as possible across the region, requiring short border times, as well as adequate road and rail infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods.
2. In the case of many countries, infrastructure projects put out for tender in the past have attracted few, if any, bids from British or European investors, while Chinese development organisations have been bolstering their infrastructure investment in a number of countries across the region. In 2015, China pledged \$60 billion to finance infrastructure in Africa, building upon its recent injection of funds into projects across the region, including in Nigeria, Mozambique, Ethiopia and South Africa.
3. The reasons for slowing UK and European infrastructure investment have not necessarily centred on the perceived dominance of China and other new players in the development arena, nor resulted from low expected returns on investment. Questions have been raised about the project preparation capacity of many planners in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the lack of accuracy and transparency in government planning, procurement and delivery processes can undermine infrastructure projects' bankability to investors.
4. In order to avoid these pitfalls and rekindle the involvement of private sector organisations in trade infrastructure projects, the dissemination of expertise from development partners to national infrastructure planners could bring about more clear and detailed financial plans from governments, covering the entire lifecycle of new developments. More transparent financial plans and procurement processes could also make investing in these projects more attractive; this has been achieved at the regional level, particularly in the case of cross border projects, where neutral procurement committees have added further credibility.
5. While investment in projects from the UK and European investors has decreased in recent years, other sources of funding are becoming available from new players in the

investment arena, namely financial services and private finance. Insurance companies, pension funds and corporate debt funds all hold the capital to invest in these projects, which could hold high returns on investment. Engagement of financial services firms could play a major role in financing a new wave of development projects across Sub-Saharan Africa, on the basis that appropriate measures are taken to: increase the bankability of projects; enable partners to manage risk; and advertise appropriate incentives to investors.

Success stories

6. With infrastructure a visible symbol of a country's commitment to development, there is a soft power benefit to developing comprehensive and efficient infrastructure networks. Ethiopia's recent creation of industrial parks represents nation-led development with FDI, job creation and productivity growth at its core. As a case of best-practice, it is important for regional governments, as well as international development actors to understand where these successes could be applied elsewhere.
7. One stop border posts in Kenya and Rwanda have reduced border transit times by 62% on average, while increases in port efficiency at both Mombasa and Dar es Salaam have further contributed to significant reductions in transport times and subsequent costs in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. The efficiency savings and reductions in export times at the port in Mombasa were made through cross-departmental reforms across the port's operational structure. Cross-border projects are becoming more common as regional cooperation has been improving, including the Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor Programme in East Africa. The Cross Border Energy link in West Africa holds the potential to vastly improve the business environment in the region. It could also mark the beginning of further cross border collaboration in trade infrastructure development, which has been lacking compared to some other sub regions in Sub-Saharan Africa.
8. In terms of recent best practice in soft-infrastructure development, the introduction of a 'single electronic window' at border points in Rwanda has seen a reduction in average processing times from 11 days to one day and ten hours. Improvements to the Ugandan customs management system, which is now internet-based and developed to allow direct interaction with traders via email or SMS, has seen border waiting times fall by 75%. Its implementation provided \$56million in annual savings and a 25% increase in customs revenues. This also has the potential of overcoming accreditation issues and the subsequent negative impacts on regional mobility.

Public private partnerships

9. Public private partnerships (PPP) have been implemented with varying degrees of success in countries throughout the region. Some partnerships have proven misleading to governments, where the 'catch all' nature of the term encompasses different types of 'concessions based' projects, 'build, operate and transfer' projects and 'design, build and operate' projects. With some governments mismanaging PPPs, it has led to sub-standard projects being completed expensively; recently the US government began encouraging African states to be more conservative in the planning and implementation of PPP.
10. In order to tackle the potential mismanagement of PPP, responsibilities should be distributed among stakeholders, with a clear understanding of where they begin and end. These stakeholders could include not only the investors and governments involved in the financing and constructing these projects, but the communities and businesses (both local and international) for whom these projects are being developed. Instead of continuing the top-down infrastructure funding and financing model, typical of the Bretton Woods organisations and INGOs, a holistic regional approach to trade infrastructure should engage with grassroots communities and businesses to establish priority projects that could provide the greatest impact for in-country and cross-border trade, identifying linkages with other regional infrastructure. Focusing resources on a

smaller number of projects could lead to those projects being produced to a higher quality, better managed and more cost-effective.

Standards in quality infrastructure

11. The need to agree standards in cross border projects is imperative to overcoming technical differences between countries, which could impact on materials used, the characteristics of the final product and the processes carried out by workers from different countries. The UK could offer technical assistance and act as a convener between partnering countries. Another key component of the UK's multi-level policy expertise in infrastructure development is that of the British Standards Institute: an organisation working extensively on providing enterprise support, policy support, technical assistance and commercialisation strategies for projects in the UK and around the world.

Diaspora and infrastructure investment

12. Diaspora communities provide a potentially rich resource for supporting infrastructure projects in their respective countries, particularly as many organisations are now looking to promote diaspora investment across the region. With one of largest diaspora populations in the world, Nigeria stands to gain from encouraging these groups to look beyond remittances and begin investing in the infrastructure projects that will be central to the nation's sustainable development in the future. With effective investment promotion from NGOs in Europe and the US, offering effective returns on investment, diaspora can support communities on a local level, areas where they have strong ties, as well as larger scale national projects like hydroelectric dams, road networks or new housing and manufacturing projects.
13. The UK has a significant advantage (in comparison to eg China, or the European Union) as it plays host to many diaspora communities from all over the continent – it was recommended that this be further explored and its strength maximised. The reciprocal good will garnered by this unique set of influencers has a great deal of potential for UK firms to increase market penetration in the region as well as encouraging increased exports from Sub-Saharan nations to the UK.

Regional blocs and supranational organisations: enhancing investment through dialogue

14. With the opening of borders essential to promoting regional investment, it is important for trading blocs in Sub-Saharan Africa to begin working towards more open borders. Relationships within these blocs are in many cases underdeveloped and sometimes lack leadership from more economically developed members, as has been the case with Nigeria in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).
15. A greater focus on national agendas and political incentives, pushed by leading countries and key member states, could provide impetus for other members to build and identify specific value chains that work best at regional level. Regional blocs could also assist in value chain coordination, which could provide member states with the opportunity to push their own agenda and enhance wider trade with neighbouring countries. Regional blocs could support countries as they specialise on different sectors, which could also increase scope for trade.
16. More multilateral fora, both at the African Union and within regional blocs could be invaluable for encouraging trade-related dialogue and progress through collaboration. Policymakers should look to support these fora, focusing on country focal points and common bureaucracy, such as competition, trade, tax and administrative collaboration. These forms of collaboration could begin to break down nontariff barriers (NTB) to trade.

Marketing Sub-Saharan Africa: improving investment promotion agencies

17. Land, power and logistics make up some of the key areas where investment promotion agencies should focus their work, connecting domestic, regional and international investors with the means to implement corporate social initiatives, establish and expand their businesses or move into new and growing markets. This includes disseminating information about investment opportunities and expanding markets.
18. The success of these agencies is central to the success of countries in attracting inward investment. These agencies need to be closely aligned with government and business leaders as a way of connecting new foreign partners with the appropriate figures, policymakers and communities. Development actors could assist in promoting the capacity building that is required in this respect, understanding where strategy gaps exist and how their work could tie in better with wider government priorities.
19. Perceptions towards trading in African markets have improved over recent years as reforms have taken place and foreign direct investment (FDI) has crept up. However, long-standing assumptions of Sub-Saharan Africa, as a relatively homogenous, unstable region, prone to political instability, still echo with potential partners and investors. Strengthening the capacity of investment promotion agencies will go some way to debunking these myths and attracting investors.

From transactions to transformation

Emerging challenges

20. In recent years, a trust deficit has been emerging across parts of Sub-Saharan Africa between government, business and society. Anti-competitive trade policies in Tanzania, along with the scale of the recent US\$5.2 billion fine handed to MTN Communications by the Nigerian Communications Commission, point towards certain national governments implementing some form of regulatory nationalism towards multinational corporations. This may inadvertently generate perceived political risk, negatively impacting investment and growth.
21. Public attitudes have shifted in some cases, as people begin to lose faith in the ability of government and international business, as they fail to provide long-term solutions for historical and contemporary challenges. Partnerships between these companies and national governments have been predominantly extractive rather than additive in the eyes of communities, thus leading to this trust deficit.
22. International business should re-establish its role as a mechanism for transformation, investing in and supporting more the countries in which they operate. Many 'transactional' deals and investments do little to promote the multi-level change crucial to long-term development through productivity growth, sustained job creation and poverty reduction. Businesses should understand where they are situated within wider national contexts, as well as in relation to potential partners with complementary or similar goals. This could include private sector companies looking to maximise the impact of their corporate social initiatives (CSI), local communities struggling with under-employment or national governments seeking partners on infrastructure projects. Through this inter-relationship, opportunities will arise to maximise the benefits that stem from initial investment and job creation, thus boosting confidence in business among the public. With these forms of investment, returns will come to investors through dividends over time, whilst encouraging ownership from governments.

Multi-level, transformative partnerships

23. The UK's suite of trade and development organisations is well situated to address these challenges and begin establishing a narrative which encompasses new approaches that strive towards comprehensive, multi-level partnerships with Sub-Saharan African countries. It is important that this new narrative goes beyond paying lip

"Many 'transactional' deals and investments do little to promote the multi-level change crucial to long-term development through productivity growth, sustained job creation and poverty reduction"

service to different countries' priorities across the region.

24. With increasing competition for market share in the trade and development arena, particularly in Sub-Saharan African economies, this holistic approach for transformative projects could set the UK's unique selling proposition apart from those of other countries. The quality of services provided by UK government, private sector and non-governmental stakeholders could prove invaluable in infrastructure development, trade facilitation, capacity building and investment incentives. Reciprocity should be central to Global Britain's work in Africa and it's important to convey this throughout all projects.
25. The GREAT Campaign could be better coordinated across the region, providing a point of contact for all stakeholders engaging with the UK's offer in Africa, including both trade and development agencies. This could assist national governments looking to attract foreign direct investment, medium-sized enterprises seeking entry into international supply chains or international NGOs looking to partner with the UK on infrastructure projects.
26. A change in mindset is required to better implement an agenda that promotes partnerships, particularly among UK organisations and businesses. Paternalism over projects, negotiations and other areas of reform discourage ownership, stifling changes that should come from national governments, civil society and the local business community. Strategic communications and media organisations could facilitate these changes and bolster international business development efforts. Reaching out to African trade experts will be invaluable in providing additional capacity in developing the UK's new relationship with Sub-Saharan African economies. This would also bring additional perspectives that challenge normative views of what the UK believes Africa wants.
27. In Botswana, stable growth following the discovery of mineral wealth has seen the country hold equity in the largest mining company in the country, Anglo-American. Coupled with Anglo-American's spend on corporate social initiatives, the potential for PPP that exists with this reciprocity model can be seen.
28. Diaspora groups have an active role to play in promoting stronger trade and development ties based on reciprocal arrangements. With connections to relevant communities and businesses, diaspora can act as a bridge to support businesses from their country of residence in setting up in their home country or vice versa. Their rich understanding of culture and national contexts can prove an invaluable resource for foreign businesses and development partners seeking to maximise impact and growth in their respective countries.

Integration with global value chains

29. In order to maximise the impact of capacity building initiatives that focus on integrating businesses into global value chains, linkages between consultants and medium to large-sized enterprises ought to be prioritised. Larger companies have the scale to specialise their production and are best placed to make the sufficient productivity gains that will subsequently drive growth; they also possess the adequate resources and capacity to undergo organisational change.
30. Capacity building in this form could provide a valuable tool in addressing the 'missing middle' issue with private equity and venture capital. Some of the biggest companies have enjoyed relative over-investment in recent years, while many smaller businesses have struggled to make similar gains due to under-investment. The creation of linkages between investors and these enterprises (worth between one and five million dollars) would be instrumental in allowing many businesses to take their next steps toward expanding their reach and operations. This targeted, growth-focused approach to investment would also positively impact job creation and capacity development.
31. NTB need to be tackled in order to boost regional trade and pave the way for better integration between businesses within the region and international value chains.

"Larger companies have the scale to specialise their production and are best placed to make the sufficient productivity gains that will subsequently drive growth"

Currently, NTB create additional costs at both the points of export and import, often with countries that have potential to be strong trading partners. Relevant infrastructure will need to be developed in order to implement agreed standards, including metrology facilities and testing laboratories. As the setting of standards is sector-led, private sector buy-in is vital from the outset, which will require capacity building and support from organisations like the British Standards Institute.

32. It should be recognised, however, that some efforts to better integrate markets with global value chains could adversely impact on local communities and their livelihoods. While it has been important for Mozambique to boost the competitiveness of its agricultural sector and become a stronger exporter in this area, its collaboration with Brazilian and Japanese investors on the ProSavana project have overlooked the needs of many small-scale, subsistence farmers, who have found their livelihoods damaged by the scheme. A more inclusive, prosperous programme would require better project preparation, including an even balance between the interests of smallholders, large agribusiness companies, the government and international partners.

“The solutions to many of Sub-Saharan Africa’s most pressing challenges present the greatest opportunities for growth, innovation, inward investment, economic diversification and labour market development.”

Emerging trends and opportunities

33. The solutions to many of Sub-Saharan Africa’s most pressing challenges present some of the greatest opportunities for growth, innovation, inward investment, economic diversification and labour market development. The challenges are complex and their solutions will require multi-level, cross border and cross sectoral collaboration in order to meet some of the key aims of the Sustainable Development Goals: climate action; public health; sustainable cities and communities; and innovation and infrastructure.

Population growth and the expansion of megacities

34. In the case of countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, rapid population growth and rural to urban migration will continue to place increased pressure on urban infrastructure. This presents major challenges for governments as they try to develop urban environments to support these growing numbers. Well-managed PPP could help get these urban infrastructure developments off the ground, while there is also scope for development organisations to assist in financing or leading these projects.
35. It is imperative for many Sub-Saharan African Countries to mitigate against the risks associated with rapid population growth, including resource scarcity. Innovation in smart agriculture creates an opening for businesses to strengthen innovation in their supply chains and reduce the pressure of agriculture on land, water and other resources. Investment in agriculture holds the potential to be transformative, not only in providing farmers with technical capacity to make their businesses more competitive in regional and global markets, but also in ensuring the sector becomes more sustainable.

Capitalising on the digital economy

36. Gradual shifts towards digitally focused occupations in some countries will mean that education and in-work training will have to be reconfigured to provide appropriate skills for these emerging roles. A closer link between public sector institutions and businesses in the IT sector would promote partnerships and provide businesses with appropriate policy support. The establishment of innovation hubs and technology incubators have proven successful in both Nairobi and Kampala, offering new avenues for diversification in both economies. Data centres covering entire countries could also open up new potential for more effective communications and internet capability.
37. A couple of examples where this new demand in the digital economy will stem from include mobile health and e-health, which are both emerging as ways to make healthcare more efficient and accessible across the world, particularly in rural areas. With much of this innovation coming from outside of Africa, government collaboration with foreign companies working on these technologies will be essential in facilitating its uptake.

38. With the growing use of mobile technology throughout Africa, fintech services could play a useful role in opening up previously unbankable value chains in rural areas, where both accessing and transferring money has been restricted.

Energy and sustainability

39. Sub-Saharan Africa experiences as much as 700 hours of power outages per year, on average. Investment from UK development partners, along with bidders for PPP would help re-establish the UK's footing in financing and coordinating the construction of infrastructure projects that could begin to overcome additional cost and productivity losses. With some of the fastest growing populations in the world, it is imperative that many Sub-Saharan African countries develop more sustainable forms of energy production as a way to meet the demand for rapidly rising populations. Ethiopia has been working with private investors on the construction of its recent hydroelectric projects on the Blue Nile and Omo River. DIT could play an active role in facilitating partnerships between UK firms focusing on hydroelectric power or other forms of renewable energy and national governments looking to invest in sustainable energy infrastructure.

Recommendations

The GREAT Campaign and cross-sectoral, regional collaboration

- **Better integrated trade and development offer which brings together regional stakeholders and development partners.**
 - **More regional collaboration between private sector and NGOs, including streamlining/aligning language.**
 - **Establish 'invisible networks' to help develop shared values and goals, including sharing of best practice.**
40. A better integrated trade and development offer from UK government could hold the potential to bring together the various streams of stakeholders and development partners throughout the region. Stronger relations with regional institutions and national governments, coupled with effective trade policies and integrated development strategies could help establish deeper trading relations and contribute towards improved development outcomes, in all of the areas highlighted in the report.
41. UK government, private sector and non-governmental organisations could all have a growing role to play, as facilitators, in regional efforts that address the challenges highlighted in this report. It is important for these groups to collaborate more regularly and efficiently. Differences in the use of jargon and acronyms in cross-sectoral discussions demonstrated, on occasion, that some common terms or acronyms used within certain sectors were not universally understood, providing a simple illustration of one barrier to effective collaboration. Government actors stand to gain from closer cooperation with private sector companies and NGOs operating throughout the region, while the benefits could also flow the other way through advisory and policy support.
42. As part of broader efforts to promote more reciprocal trading relations with countries across Sub-Saharan Africa, UK trade and development actors could play a convening and facilitating role in the creation of 'invisible' networks between businesses, government and civil society. These networks could begin to establish a culture of shared values that increases coordination across sectors, industries and borders, striving towards sustainable outcomes that benefit all. A common approach to stewardship could facilitate the improvement of different professions through peer-to-peer networks or the sharing of best practice. Such an approach could also hasten the levelling of standards between countries within the region and with others around the world.

Labour markets and skills shortages

- **Opportunities for UK educational providers to contribute to filling skills gaps**
- **UK university partnerships in Sub-Saharan countries**
- **Further consideration of improvements to freedom of movement and visas**

43. The education sector is growing at an increased rate across the region, driven partly by rapid population growth, as well as new skill requirements emerging from evolving sectors, industries and overseas investment. This growing demand presents an opportunity for British companies and other international education institutions, which could contribute to filling skills gaps and boosting the productivity and competitiveness of labour markets across the region.
44. British universities have already demonstrated their potential in reaching global markets through establishing new institutions in different countries, partnering with overseas universities and offering distance learning e-courses. The soft power benefits of these investments and partnerships will expand the benefits of this growth beyond the education sector, with English-based teaching and curricula closely aligned with global economic structures and business practices.
45. With regard to movement of labour, there is currently an imbalance between the 'openness' of the UK and that of most Sub-Saharan African states. Freedom of movement for business people is integral to effective trade facilitation; demand for visas and a streamlined application process will grow in future as Sub-Saharan Africa's services sector continues to expand, with the region's exports totalling \$96billion in 2016.

Encouraging enterprise

- **Special lines of credit for sectors with promising growth**

46. Governments could establish special lines of credit for sectors that demonstrate the most promising signs of growth. This support could be targeted specifically at small and medium sized enterprises with the capacity to expand. In order to support this, brokers providing information on different funding options and credit opportunities could also further boost growth in specific sectors. With entrepreneurs often taking the longer-term approach, they should be seen as transformative partners for all countries.

Preference systems

- **Contextualised systems of preference to stimulate regional value chains**

47. Contextualised preferences would benefit individual countries across the region, following the UK's exit from the EU. This could be tackled once the UK concludes negotiations in Brussels as the transposed form of the 'Everything But Arms' agreement will suffice in the short-term for the least developed countries in the region. Preferences should be well aligned with the national priorities for each country. The recruitment of in-country experts and trade advisers could greatly increase the UK's ability to develop optimal policy; their country level expertise makes them well placed to match UK objectives with those of particular countries. This additional capacity from local advisers would be vital in preventing the rollout of blanket regulations, which could result in preference erosion. If balanced correctly, preference rules could also be leveraged to stimulate regional supply chains by promoting growth in larger member states. They also facilitate the establishment of value chains in less developed, neighbouring countries within the same trading bloc. Therefore, engaging and establishing preferences with regional characteristics in mind could provide short term benefits; beyond this, regional engagement on free trade agreements could provide the next step to deepening trading relations with these development outcomes in mind.
48. This transposition of trading regulations will do little to satisfy those in the UK who have voted to leave the EU, while trading relations based merely on preferences will not

suffice in fully engaging governments and businesses throughout the region.

Incentivising investment

- **Use existing channels to expand economic diplomacy efforts**

49. The UK's economic diplomacy should be expanded throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Efforts to establish synergies between government organisations and institutions could build overall technical capacity. DFID, DIT, the FCO and the British Chambers of Commerce all have a role to play in boosting the UK's offer in Africa, while cross-governmental coordination could eliminate any risk of duplicating projects.

Trade facilitation

- **More integration resulting from implementation of trade-related regulatory processes**
- **Further support/provision of technical capacity on alignment of standards**

50. Investment promotion authorities could consider developing their operations and policies around the Ethiopian model, which focuses on building and maintaining relationships with investors and organisations, expanding beyond the simpler transactional model.

51. Accelerating the implementation of key trade-related regulatory processes could primarily allow African businesses and industries to integrate better with one other and promote the creation of regional value chains between countries. Similar efforts are required to harmonise industry and export standards to that effect, establishing universal standards across regions to reduce time related costs and promote the development of value chains.

52. UK institutions could have an instrumental role in providing donor assistance and technical capacity building to facilitate the establishment of universal standards. Currently, marginal value is impeded by a lack of testing infrastructure, commonly agreed standards and competencies in upholding them. The voluntary setting of standards between companies, with the support from government, could have significant socio-economic benefits beyond simply easing trade and could create value chains with broader values.

53. Donor support and technical assistance to management could help these efforts to remain country-led. Assistance with compliance to regulation and standards could take place on a regional level (i.e. ECOWAS, EAC) or come to the fore in future free trade agreements on either a Tripartite Free Trade Area or a Continental Free Trade Area. The UK could also provide support during processes on these agreements, particularly to Commonwealth countries, emphasising a renewed commitment to partnerships and seeking optimal, reciprocal outcomes.

Freedom of movement

- **Further consideration of facilitation of movement**
- **Review of visa processes and requirements**

54. While the free movement of business people across regions should be encouraged, measures should be taken to avoid migration leading to locals unable to find work. Simplifications made to visa qualification requirements could boost intra-regional trade, particularly for professionals in the services sector, where freedom of movement is an essential aspect of doing business.

55. In order to facilitate the movement of business people between Africa and the UK, universal in-country visa issuance could be implemented to expedite processing before travelling to the UK. Nationals from a number of smaller countries in Sub-Saharan Africa go to great expense in order to acquire visas for business travel to the UK, often having to cross borders and make overnight stays in order to process their applications at regional centres. It has also been suggested that multi entry visas for business people over a fixed period could also contribute to promoting freedom of movement.

First this will encourage business people from the region to travel more often to the UK and build stronger trading ties, but it will also help establish stronger linkages with the Sub-Saharan Africa's growing services sector.

56. Another benefit will come from visible efforts being made by the UK to level the playing field with visas and work permits, which are relatively easy to obtain for British nationals travelling to almost all countries in the region. This would also demonstrate a level of commitment from the UK as it seeks to establish more reciprocal trading and business relations with African countries.

Conclusion

Boosting trade and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa will be invaluable over coming years as new opportunities emerge for both domestic and international businesses operating within the region. Developing trade infrastructure and facilitation measures, as well as effective investment incentives and labour market developments, will be key to taking full advantage of Africa's demographic dividend and tackling many of the challenges facing the continent. Improving cross-sectoral and cross border collaboration has been instrumental in boosting trade and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa in recent years and improving the coordination between these groups will go a long way to sustained regional growth. The conference brought together stakeholders from across the region and from a spectrum of sectors: their reflections have been invaluable to beginning the development of a more comprehensive, holistic conception of the interplay between trade and development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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